1:Haskins K-4,5 (1952-1954)1956 SO11 Bahia Brazilians SO11

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Edward C. Haskins

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H. W. Hutchinson

Faculdade de Filosofia
Universidade da Bahia
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*Although Vila Recôncavo is a real town, the names of all persons and places have been changed for the purposes of this study.

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RACE RELATIONS IN A RURAL COMMUNITY OF THE BAHIAN RECÔNCAVO[1]

by
HARRY W. HUTCHINSON

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I. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a narrow strip along the north-eastern coast of Brazil in what are now the States of Pernambuco, Alagoas, Sergipe and Bahia, was the most important region of economic, political and social life in the whole colony. The rainfall along this portion of the coast is dependable and the extremely fertile soil, which was originally covered with thick forests, was ideally suited for sugar cane. By the seventeenth century, this region produced a large part of the world's sugar supply. Sugar, which was then a luxury in Europe, brought fabulous profits, and the north-eastern coast of Brazil became an exceedingly prosperous colony. Large cities grew up along the coast; Salvador in Bahia and Recife in Pernambuco became the most important centres of colonial life, and Salvador was the capital of the colony from 1549 to 1763. Both were cities of great wealth based on the booming sugar industry. The numerous churches built in Salvador during the period of opulence, with their elaborate gold-leafed wood carving and polychrome tile work, are witnesses to the tremendous wealth of the era.

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It was the plantation system, the basis of this lucrative sugar industry, which gave this region many of its characteristic traditions and formed patterns of race relations which have persisted in a modified form into the present. Gilberto Freyre in his monumental *Casa Grande e Senzala*, and other Brazilian writers [1],[2] have described life on these sugar plantations. African slaves provided the manpower. More than three million Negroes were imported from Africa during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a large proportion came to the sugar plantations of north-eastern Brazil. The Portuguese plantation owners became rich, and came to form a regional aristocracy with a luxurious and ostentatious way of life. The slaves and their masters, on these plantations, formed two distinct social groups, but it is distinctive of the region that their relations were intimate and warm; Freyre describes the intimacy between the *moleque* (Negro lad) and the master's son as playmates, between the master's wife and her domestic servants, between the Negro nurse and her white charges, and other close

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[2] The figures in brackets refer to the bibliography on page 46.

4: Pierson Z-4,5 (1935-1937) 1967
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research. With its appearance, and with that of other studies carried out since that time—but also including a few which had appeared previously, in addition to the pioneer work of Professor Gilberto Freyre and of others which antedated this book—a considerable body of materials on the Brazilian racial situation is now available, especially in Portuguese.

In an attempt to extend and to bring more up-to-date my knowledge and understanding of this situation, I have consulted a rather extensive bibliography, in so far as it was possible to gain access to it by diligent effort in both Brazil and the United States. For patient and considerate assistance with this task, I am under especial obligation to Dr. Zacharias Pithon Barreto and Thales de Azevedo of Bahia, Nell W. Herbert of the reference department of Pack Memorial Library in Asheville, Professor Edgar T. Thompson of Duke University, Professor Mario Wagner Vieira da Cunha, Maria Isabel dos Santos Carvalho, and Maria Aparecida Madeira Kerbeg of São Paulo, and, most especially of all, Professor Emilio Willems of Vanderbilt University. For suggestions regarding bibliography and other encouragement, I am grateful to Professors Richard M. Morse of Yale University, Charles Wagley of Columbia University, and T. Lynn Smith of the University of Florida.

Some of the materials from a paper prepared for the World Conference on Race Relations, held in Honolulu in 1954, and which appeared in *Race Relations in World Perspective*, edited by Andrew W. Lind and published the next year by the University of Hawaii Press, appear in altered form in this new Introduction. That book is now out-of-print; and I am grateful to Professor Lind, and to Thomas Nickerson, director of the University of Hawaii Press, for permission to use these materials here.

4: Pierson Z-4, 5 (1935-1937) 1967
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PREFACE

In 1934, while I was a Fellow in sociology at the University of Chicago, my attention was called by Dr. Herbert Blumer to the possibilities of Brazil as a locus for the study of racial and cultural contacts, and I subsequently received encouragement from Drs. Robert Redfield, Louis Wirth, and Ellsworth Faris to consider these possibilities seriously. As I subsequently went through the available literature in several languages, I became increasingly interested in Brazil, particularly as a locus for investigating, in an intimate and detailed way, what appeared to be a racial situation sufficiently distinct from that in India, for example, where the social order is based upon caste, or that in the United States, where the Negro is now escaping from a caste status and becoming a racial minority similar to the Jew in Europe and elsewhere, to constitute, along with, perhaps, the Hawaiian and certain other similar racial situations, a distinct type. At approximately this same time Dr. Robert E. Park returned from an extended world-tour, during which he had observed at first hand a number of the more important centers of racial and cultural contact, including Brazil, in which he also had for some time been particularly interested.

The outgrowth of these converging interests was a two-year period of field work in Brazil (from 1935 to 1937) as research assistant of the Social Science Research Committee of the University of Chicago, to which organization, together with the Rosenwald Fund, I am indebted for making this study financially possible. Twenty-two months of this period of residence were spent in intimate study of the social order of one city, the old seaport of Bahia.

This focusing of attention upon one particular locus is, in my opinion, an inescapable procedure, since the sentiments which determine human and personal relations are so in-

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122 The realization of this project is due to the initiative of Unesco, which subsidized it and made it possible, thanks to an agreement made with the Foundation for the Development of Science in Bahia, within the framework of the program of social research of the State of Bahia and Columbia University. It is a pleasant duty for me to thank my friends: Professor Charles Wagley of Columbia University, in New York, for the well-informed collaboration that he has kindly given to the organization of the plan of investigation and to the investigation itself, as director of the program mentioned above; Professor Anisio S. Texeira for his clear discussion of certain topics of work and for the support he gave in his capacity as secretary general of the foundation. It is also necessary for me to thank Mr. Alfred Métraux of the Department of Social Sciences of Unesco, who approved our plans for the investigation and the choice of my person to direct it, who has had the kindness to read my notes, to discuss with me the numerous problems of the study, and to help me with his critical comments and his authoritative opinions. I wish likewise to show my gratitude for the excellent co-operation that my assistants in the investigation gave me: Marie Amélie C. Leite, Professor of the School of Social Service of Bahia, Josildeth S. Gomes and Thérèse Cardoso, my students of anthropology of the faculty of philosophy of the University of Bahia, and my daughter Sylvia de Azevedo, as well as Mr. Maurilio Pinto da Silva, Jayme Abreu, and Louis R. Sena for other forms of unselfish collaboration, not excepting the excellent photographer Mr. Pierre Verger for his technical assistance. I thank, moreover, the recreational clubs, the religious brotherhoods, the schools, and the organizations that register professional work for having facilitated for me access to their card-index cabinets and their registers. I wish finally to mention very especially my informants, whom it is unfortunately impossible to name; I wish to express to them here all my gratitude for their good will and for the wealth of data and of personal experiences that they kindly entrusted to me and that I have utilized for a scientific purpose; I add that none of them can be held responsible for the way in which I have utilized this material.

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January, 1952 Thales de Azevedo